

Speaking Notes for I/Chief Steve Bell
Press Conference
February 17, 2022 – 3:30 pm

Good afternoon....Bonjour à tous,

My name is Steve Bell and I am the Interim Chief of the Ottawa Police Service.

I want to thank our partners from the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for being here today.

With me I have:

Deputy Commissioner Chris Harkins of the OPP

and

RCMP Deputy-Commissioner Mike Duheme

The Ottawa Police Service, the RCMP and OPP, as well as numerous police agencies in Ontario and Quebec, are here in Ottawa. We have been bolstering our resources, developing clear plans, and preparing to take action.

That action is imminent.

In the past few days, we have been communicating directly to the unlawful protesters.

We have told them that they must leave, and we have warned them of the consequences of disobeying these orders.

We want to end this unlawful protest peacefully and safely. We are prepared to employ lawful techniques to remove unlawful protestors from our streets.

Today, I want to speak directly to our community and specifically the residents and businesses of the downtown core.

Your safety – everyone's safety -- is our priority.

We know that you have been through a lot and I know these ongoing unlawful protests have caused pain and suffering.

We are committed to returning your streets back to you and back to normal.

We know that the increased police presence may be distressing.

Our officers are here to help. They care about this community and they are here to keep you safe while they complete this operation.

Overnight and into today, we have begun to harden the perimeter around the protests.

We are installing fencing and other barriers throughout the area.

In furtherance of our efforts to bring our city back to a state of normalcy, we have introduced a Secured Area. The Secured Area includes the area from Bronson Avenue to the Canal, and from the Queensway to Parliament Hill.

The Secured Area includes almost 100 checkpoints that will have police presence to ensure that those seeking to enter the Secured Area for an unlawful reason, such as to join this protest, cannot enter the core.

Again, I know that these are not measures that our community is used to. They will be in place only as long as necessary to remove this unlawful protest.

Our officers are aware of the impact on you and we are taking every step we can to minimize the impact on residents and businesses while keeping out those who would come to do more harm.

We want to reassure everyone that if you live, work, or have a lawful reason to be in the area, there will be a minimal impact on your access.

Once through the checkpoints, those with a lawful reason will be free to move about.

Individuals may leave the Secured Area at any time.

As we continue to increase our actions, we will be communicating them directly to the public. We have opened lines of communications with schools and other institutions.

To those engaged in this unlawful protest, if you want to leave under your own terms -- the time has come.

I am available to take questions.